

# **MEETING MINUTES**

## **Ecological Resources Committee**

**October 26, 2004**

### **Attendees and Introductions**

Dan Corcoran (EID), Paul J. Creger (Individual), Jake Eymann (EID), Shelly Hatleburg (EN2), Tom Henie (Kirkwood Meadows PUD), Alice Howard (Individual), Cheri Jagers (EID), Tom Keegan (ECORP), Len Marino (EID), Brad Pearson (Kit Carson Resort), Don Pearson (EID), Ken Pense (EN2), Craig Seltenrich (ECORP), Steve Setoodeh (EID), Bill Slightam (EID), Jann Williams (U.S. Forest Service), David Witter (EID), Pat Johnson (EID)

### **Welcome and Previous Meeting Minute Review**

The Ecological Resources Committee (ERC) convened on Tuesday, October 26, 2004, at approximately 9:10 a.m., at the offices of the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID).

Cheri Jagers, EID Project 184 Coordinator, convened the meeting and asked for approval of and/or objections to Minutes from June 2, 2004 and August 24, 2004. As there were no objections, the Minutes for June 2, 2004 and August 24, 2004 were approved.

### **Alder Feasibility Study Update, H.R. 2828**

Dave Witter, EID Director of Water Policy Coordination and Special Projects, addressed the Alder Feasibility Study. The Alder Feasibility Study was approved by President Bush on October 25, 2004. Mr. Witter provided copies of H.R. 2828 for ERC members' review and indicated that the objective of H.R. 2828 was to provide legislation for the storage of water for dry and critically dry years. He emphasized that this is a drought preparedness-type project. Mr. Witter indicated that the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) will not begin the study until 2006. The approval of President Bush is merely an authorization; the funds will still need to be appropriated. Len Marino, EID Co-Hydro Division Manager, inquired as to whether EID will be working in conjunction with USBR. Mr. Witter responded in the affirmative and that there will be a contact person at USBR.

### **Fish Enhancement Fund Report**

Tom Henie, Kirkwood Meadows Public Utility District (KMPUD), discussed the fish enhancement fund and directed the ERC members to a statement from U.S. Bank which was attached to the agenda packet. The Fish Enhancement Fund has a current balance of \$150,000.00. These funds are to be used for the ten-year fishery project.

Mr. Henie directed ERC members to review correspondence from Dave McFarland at the American Trout & Salmon Co., a popular stocking company for fish in the area. When Mr.

McFarland has sent this letter to confirm the fish purchase agreement for Caples and Silver Lakes. American Trout & Salmon Co. will supply approximately 5,770 lbs of fish at \$2.60 per pound for a total of \$15,000.00.

KMPUD is having a meeting with the Fish Enhancement Fund Committee in the near future. Mr. Henie indicated that there were open issues with regards to California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG) either enhancing or supplementing the fish population.

Brad Pearson, Kit Carson Resort, inquired as to the best method to disperse the fish into the lakes. Discussion ensued, with Tom Henie explaining that dumping the fish in one spot off the shore was one option, or the fish could be dispersed in the center of the lake. It was suggested that the fish be tagged in order to watch how well they adapted. Tom Henie is presently pursuing the best method, but proposed that possibly both methods may be utilized. Mr. Pearson suggested placing the stock fish in a cage and transporting them to the center of the lakes and dispersing them. He indicated that he will be speaking with Stafford Lehr of CDFG about this and what, if any, rules pertain to fishing where there are active fish ladders (i.e., Silver Lake). Mr. Pearson indicated an incident had occurred in one of these locations where a young person got a hook in his eye due to the density of fisher-people. This safety issue deserves to be examined more thoroughly by ERC and Stafford Lehr of CDFG.

Dan Corcoran, EID Environmental Review Specialist, inquired if there were additional methods of dispersing the stock fish. Brad Pearson responded the fish could be dumped from large trucks, but some will get stuck in the mud. The idea is to get the big fish out into the water. After being transported from Susanville, they are stunned for a couple of days, and their survival is tenuous. Tom Henie offered to approach Mr. McFarland at American Trout & Salmon Co. about this issue.

Don Pearson, EID Director of Recreation, would like to have selected fish tagged to study their travel.

### **License Implementation Projects Tracking Update**

Cheri Jagers, EID Project 184 Coordinator, addressed Operations & Maintenance Requirements (attached to the agenda packet). A draft summary of conditions by timeline was distributed. Settlement Agreement Conditions needing to be addressed annually, semi-annually, and up to “within six months” of license were reviewed. The ERC was asked to review the Timeline document and direct questions and or changes to Ms. Jagers.

Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, asked who will be tracking these conditions. Ms. Jagers will be the responsible party for tracking the progress and completion of these conditions. Ms. Jagers proposed that the February meeting be ERC’s annual meeting to allow adequate time for the preparation of the FERC annual report, due June 30, 2005. This two-day meeting would be comprised of condition workshops on Day One and a formal committee meeting on Day Two. Len Marino suggested a link to the EID Project 184 web page to access all the meeting schedules and information.

## **February 2005 Meeting Two-Day Format**

Summaries of conditions, due within six months of the license, were posted around the meeting room. ERC members were requested to review and sign up for conditions of interest. Conditions with the most interest will be candidates for workshops at the February meeting. ERC members will kept apprised of activities/progress on conditions in which they express interest. Posted conditions were then reviewed as a group.

Condition 15: Pesticide Use. Dan Corcoran, EID Environmental Review Specialist, stated each year EID will need to set forth what pesticides will be used in the ensuing year. Treatment areas, types of vegetation, and regulations that apply will be reviewed annually. Dams and canal benches are the primary areas of focus for safety of vegetation and proper pesticides, if any. The United States Forest Service (USFS) and CDFG will be primarily responsible for this condition.

Condition 34: Pulse Flows was addressed by Len Marino, EID Co-Hydro Division Manager. EID is pursuing pulse flow study grants offered by the University of California, Davis.

Condition 37: Monitoring Program and the gaging plan were also addressed by Len Marino. Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, stated the gaging plan was due within six months of license, but EID intends to comply within three months of license.

Condition 46: Recreation Implementation Plan. Coordinate with the USFS to develop an Implementation Plan for recreational activities and Condition 50 projects. The first plan is due within 6 months of license, and is updated annually thereafter. This condition is being coordinated by Don Pearson, EID Director of Recreation.

Condition 62: Special-Use Authorizations. This condition was briefly discussed. Preparation for USFS review at the April 1, 2005 meeting will begin shortly.

Condition 31: Minimum Streamflows (within three months of license). Adjust streamflow to and begin following streamflow and storage requirements as specified in the new license.

Condition 65: Tunnel Groundwater. Discussion ensued regarding filing a plan with FERC approved by the USFS that would minimize groundwater seepage. This condition is due within three months of license. A USFS approved plan has been completed and filed with FERC.

Condition 39: Mitigation for Entrainment. These are small diversion points at Carpenter and Alder Creeks which feed into the Project 184 canal. Fish screening devices are to be installed. Plans for the screens are to be completed within six months of license.

Condition 43: Wildlife and Sensitive Plant Protection Measures. This is a six-month review project. Len Marino of EID emphasized the importance of this condition and the need for involvement by the USFS and CDFG.

Alice Howard, concerned citizen, inquired as to the whereabouts of the USFS and CDFG representatives. The resulting discussion concluded that inclement weather conditions may have contributed to the low attendance at this ERC meeting.

Condition 44: Noxious Weeds. Dan Corcoran addressed Condition 44 and indicated a report would have to be filed within six months. Len Marino pointed out that, after the initial filing, EID could prepare a weed plan and file it with FERC every year. He indicated that this would be a living, breathing document.

With regards to the above conditions, Len Marino stated that these are the conditions that EID is going to address in February, 2005. Conference rooms will be reserved for “break-out” or concurrent workshops to meet on these pertinent conditions.

A suggestion was made to consider ways to be more proactive in getting agencies to attend ERC meetings. Cheri Jagers offered to send out an email to ERC members containing the various conditions to be covered at the February meeting.

## **Project 184 Update**

### **Stream Flow and Water Storage Update**

Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, reported on the end-of-the-month water storage for Aloha, Echo, Caples, and Silver Lakes. During August, EID drew 109 acre feet from Caples Lake. The three-month average is 155 acre feet. The current stream flow in the south Fork American River is 100 cubic feet per second.

### **Capital Improvements**

Jake Eymann, EID Associate Engineer, gave a brief summary regarding the Lake Aloha Dam repairs. The repairs began September 7 and concluded on October 8, 2004. Mr. Eymann gave a PowerPoint presentation showing the work performed on the mortar removal of the dam, repairs, and simulation of the telemetry station. The purpose of the telemetry station is to monitor the lake level. Bill Slightam informed ERC that the station is now functioning.

Details of recent repairs to Lake Aloha Auxiliary Dam No. 4, Dam No. 6, Dam No. 7, and the Spillway were presented and discussed. The crew consisted of 12 to 14 individuals who worked for a month to accomplish these repairs. EID worked closely with the USFS to successfully complete this extensive and environmentally sensitive project. Solar and satellite technology enabled workers to communicate via email. Mr. Eymann expressed EID’s concern for Lake Aloha’s cleanliness. EID removed many pounds of public trash from the site in addition to all waste generated by the project.

Cheri Jagers commended Jake Eymann and his crew for a job well done.

## **Recreation**

Don Pearson, EID Director of Recreation, informed the ERC that a site for the new Caples Lake boat launch facility had been chosen. It is located in the area of Caples House, which is on the east side of the lake. There was an alternate site at the Woods Creek fishing access, but there is not adequate ground for the required number of parking spaces. The USFS, Department of Boating and Waterways, and EID staff are working collaboratively on a grant application. The application for 2006-2007 funding cycle is due by April 1, 2005. Acquiring permits and construction may be time-consuming and difficult. There is a possibility of a pre-cast boat launch, which takes just a few hours to set up.

Tom Henie, KMPUD, inquired as to the 100% grant. Mr. Henie asked for the specific location of the construction site. Don Pearson advised that when the aerial map is completed, EID will post it on the EID Project 184 web page for all ERC members to review.

Mr. Henie inquired as to whether boats could be launched later in the year. Don Pearson indicated that this is possible unless drought conditions exist and the lake is drawn down too low for launching.

Brad Pearson, Kit Carson Resort, informed ERC that there are ten USFS cabins in this area. These individuals should be involved with the development of this facility and have an opportunity to comment before the project is begun. Don Pearson said that if there is going to be an access road, these individuals need to be apprised of the situation, and indicated that EID will make contact with all these individuals.

Caples Lake has a five M.P.H. limit, and no water skis, jet skis, etc. are allowed on the lake. Don Pearson proposed a letter from Alpine County accompany EID's grant application indicating that speed limits will remain the same.

## **Spillway 20**

Len Marino, Co-Hydro Division Manager for EID, informed the ERC that all permits have been received for Spillway 20. The whole floor of the diversion box was poured as of October 22, 2004. Due to the recent inclement weather, no further progress has been made to date. When the current storm passes, construction will continue. The objective is to have Spillway 20 done by November 20, 2004. Mr. Marino invited ERC members to come view the construction, if they are interested.

## **Forebay**

Jake Eymann, EID Associate Engineer, is in charge of stability analysis study of Forebay Dam. The study will include assessing the types of soil and performing strength tests.

Mr. Eymann addressed dam height and raising the level of Forebay Dam, which is considered a weak link in the facility. It does not afford much flexibility. The objective is to run the power

plant when demand for power is the greatest and higher revenue can be achieved. The goal is to provide lower-cost energy to the ratepayers. Power analysis studies are underway.

### **Lake Aloha Trout Survey and Removal**

Shelly Hatleburg of EN2 gave a presentation on Lake Aloha and the trout survey and removal.

EN2 surveyed four ponds below auxiliary dams. In June, a pond below Auxiliary Dam No. 7, contained water, but the recent survey showed it dry. Other ponds were dried up or too shallow to support trout as well.

Between August 30 and September 1, 2004, gill nets were placed in Auxiliary Dam No. 7, which environment seemed most suitable for trout. Fish were discovered on that initial survey. Two brook trout were captured and removed. EN2 set the gill net across one of the narrower channels about six feet deep and caught a mating female and male. They did not see any other fish in the ponds. EN2 also observed tree frogs and macroinvertebrates.

During the entire recent survey, a total of two fish were found in the Big Pond. Ms. Hatleburg indicated that 100% removal is not guaranteed.

Len Marino inquired as to whether these lakes were shallow enough to walk across. Ms. Hatleburg responded that the deepest is eight to ten feet, but the shorelines were fairly shallow. In the middle of the pond and sometimes in certain channels, the water is very deep. In these locations, the nets were set overnight for at least eight hours. Also, there was little habitat for fish by means of logs, etc., for them to hide under.

Len Marino advised the ERC that it was his interpretation the 4(e) condition for this project had been met and accomplished. EN2 will plan to go back for pond surveys every two years. As Len Marino emphasized, with the installation of the telemetry stations, there will be no further spills! Ms. Hatleburg concurred that if there were no further spills, no surveys are required.

Bill Slightam, EID Hydrographer, inquired as to any other surveys of the lake itself. Cheri Jagers, EID Project 184 Coordinator, responded that the Trout Survey is the only required survey at Lake Aloha per the settlement agreement. The license requirement goal is to remove trout, frog predators, from potential frog habitat. Efforts will focus on the ponds where the frogs may possibly propagate.

### **Other Items and Discussion**

Cheri Jagers, EID Project 184 Coordinator, requested the ERC to consider upcoming meeting dates. A two-day event on February 15 and 16, 2005 will include workshops and the annual meeting. At the May 24, 2005 ERC meeting, water levels will be addressed and examined. There will also be ERC meetings conducted in August and October, 2005.

Ms. Jagers inquired of the ERC as to conflicts with the proposed meeting dates. Paul Creger, concerned citizen from Santa Clara, put forth that February is a difficult month due to weather and holidays and that possibly March would be better. Ms. Jagers reviewed agenda item 5.B, the required meeting schedule. March also appears to be a very busy month with many required resource agency meetings.

Brad Pearson, Kit Carson Resort, expressed May 24 may be too late depending on what kind of “water” year developed. Bill Slightam, Hydrographer for EID, informed the ERC that input at the February meeting will allow EID to adjust for stream flows. The official water year type is not announced until about the second week in May.

Len Marino encouraged participation by the CDFG and the USFS in this process. Ms. Jagers indicated that ERC meeting dates will be confirmed with the resource agencies.

### **License Requirements Project, Plans and Study Updates**

Ken Pense, EID consultant, presented an update on the transportation and trails plans required by 4(e) Conditions 57 and 58. The Project Resource Team performing fieldwork (i.e., checking every road, every culvert, taking measurements and conditions of roads and culverts, etc.) consists of Karen Quidachay, Andrew Price, and Ken Peens. The goal is to collaboratively develop a five-year maintenance plan and, where necessary, consider ways to bring roads up to proper standards and appropriate levels.

The Settlement Conditions require 18 miles of roads to be addressed. The following classifications depict the levels of roads ERC needs to focus on:

- 1) Blocked
- 2) Passable for four-wheel drive
- 3) Aggregate
- 4) Chip seal
- 5) Paved

The EN2 team met with the USFS on October 21, 2004, and together they marked all Level 1 and 2 roads. These roads experience approximately one to two cars per day use by EID vehicles.

Len Marino, EID Co-Hydro Division Manager, inquired if there are many roads and culverts to inspect. Mr. Pense responded that there are many culverts. There have been more difficulties with the trails than the roads. Mr. Pense was able to walk all the trails according to the Trail Plan and assess them quite easily. The trail presenting the most difficulty was very steep and had 28 logs to traverse.

Mr. Marino inquired as to EID’s use of the roads and trails. Mr. Pense indicated that where EID had exclusive use of project roads/trails, maintenance would be EID’s sole responsibility. However, maintenance of mixed use roads or trails with incidental use by EID will be the responsibility of the USFS. EID will negotiate with the USFS on shared maintenance for some

roads and trails. Maintenance of the culverts on mixed use roads will not be the responsibility of EID.

### **Amphibian Monitoring Status Report**

A presentation was given by Craig Seltenrich and Tom Keegan of ECORP of Roseville, California regarding Condition 37, Amphibian Monitoring.

Craig Seltenrich presented the 2004 Amphibian Monitoring results. This is the first full year of surveying. There were no established subsites, and there have been none created according to habitat types. In addition to the sites listed in the settlement agreement, a site at Icehouse Road was monitored.

The lowest elevation site, the Akin Powerhouse, had the best breeding sites for frogs. Eleven egg masses were observed at four subsites on June 14. They were likely deposited in late May/early June (based on the age of eggs). The habitat for tadpoles is poor at subsites C and D. Water temperatures are 3 to 4 degrees colder below the Powerhouse (when operating); this results in slower tadpole development. The Powerhouse flows affect downstream habitat. 13 metamorphs were observed at both subsites in round 4.

Len Marino inquired as to the definition of a metamorph. Craig Seltenrich defined a metamorph as a recently developed frog that has just shed its tail and is leaving its aquatic environment.

Steve Setoodeh, EID Director of Environmental Compliance and Resource Management, inquired as to whether there was a certain time of day to observe metamorphs. Craig Seltenrich stated the best observation time is during the day when it is sunny.

Mr. Marino inquired as to what the major predation issue was. Mr. Seltenrich informed the ERC that crayfish were the predators that posed the most concern. The pike minnow may be eating some of the egg masses, but there are not many of these minnows. Recent studies have indicated that the crayfish population is knocking down other species. They breed in winter and carry eggs under their tail until they find a proper location to hatch. It is a cyclic pattern. The "Single" crayfish is a native species up to six inches long which feeds on egg masses. They do not like clear water, and thus are not seen much during the day. They move into the shallows at night. Due to the lack of high outflows since 1998, there has been a boom in the crayfish population. If some major outflows this year, there may be a success rate in these tadpoles.

Mr. Marino indicated that the next step would be to schedule a meeting with the USFS, CDFG, Chris Shutes, and ECORP to discuss the surveys to be conducted next year. The Amphibian Monitoring results will be posted on the EID Project 184 web page.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

### **Next meeting**

February 15-16, 2005, 9:00 a.m., at EID Headquarters Building.